

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-5401

August 20, 2009

The Honorable Pete Geren
Secretary of the Army
101 Army Pentagon
Washington, DC 20310

Dear Secretary Geren:

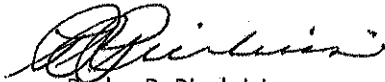
I write to you regarding recent activities at the former Naval Station Roosevelt Roads (NSRR). In particular, I want to express my disappointment with the Department of the Army's decision to request that the Department of the Navy transfer to the Army a parcel of land within NSRR that includes the Seals Operations Building and its surrounding area. Such a transfer, which has been opposed by Governor Luis Fortuño and the Local Redevelopment Authority's Executive Director Jaime L. González, would render the NSRR's dry dock unusable for all intents and purposes. I have been advised by Mr. González that he has briefed Army officials on viable alternatives to this transfer that would allow the Army to meet its legitimate development needs without destroying the dry dock's vast economic potential. For this reason, I respectfully urge that the Army reconsider its decision to request this property transfer.

As Mr. González stated in his August 14th letter to Deputy Assistant Secretary Joseph F. Calcara, this transfer cannot reasonably be claimed to implicate issues of national security or force protection. I assure you that Governor Fortuño and I would fully support the transfer, notwithstanding the economic harm it would cause to Puerto Rico, if the transfer were necessary to fulfill the Army's warfighting mission or to ensure the safety of our soldiers. By all appearances, however, this decision merely reflected the Army's view that—from an administrative, logistical and cost perspective—the transfer was the most convenient for the Army. This may well be the case. But what is most expedient for the Army will be harmful for Puerto Rico's economic well-being, particularly for those communities on the Island's eastern coast most affected by the closure of Roosevelt Roads. It has been estimated that development and use of the dry dock could create up to 400 new jobs in Puerto Rico, whose June 2009 unemployment rate was 14.5%, the highest in the nation by a substantial margin. Although the Army has expressly acknowledged the economic damage the transfer will cause—see Mr. Calcara's June 10th letter to Mr. González—I do not believe that the Army accorded this factor the weight it deserves in reaching the decision to nevertheless proceed with the transfer request.

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I hope you will reconsider this transfer request and I thank you for your attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Pierluisi", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Pedro R. Pierluisi
Member of Congress

cc: Luis G. Fortuño, Governor of Puerto Rico

Cecilia Muñoz, White House Director of Intergovernmental Affairs

Joseph F. Calcara, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army (Installations and Housing)

Jaime L. Gonzalez, Executive Director, Local Redevelopment Authority for Roosevelt Road